17: Southall E-9 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Lee FL11

the hands and, by avoidance of the age groups next above them, slowly acquiring 857
proficiency in the typical adult male pursuits, while the girls are drawn into the
domestic tasks of the elementary family, food preparation and cooking, fetching
water, and minding babies.

The young boys of a play group sleep together in the guest hut of a homestead 513
where they no longer share their mother's hut at night. The girls sleep together in 841
the hut of some widow of the group who is past childbearing age. This is the most
important institution for the transmission of female culture. Girls only leave it at
marriage, and till that time they are continuously trained in the adult roles expected
of them. Boys at puberty build themselves bachelor huts (*Dholuo: simbi*) in which 882
they sleep and where they also entertain their girl friends. A group of young men
makes a formal assignation with a group of eligible girls from a segment of another 836
exogamal lineage into which marriage is possible, and visits and entertainments are
held to and from the one lineage territory to the other. The two groups pair off
with one another into sex partnerships which last till the groups break up and reform.
A youth graduates out of this company of *simbi* age-mates at marriage.

Authority over children rests jointly with the parents. That of the mother is likely 593
to be the more effective in the early years, and she always holds a strong sanction
in her manipulation and control of the food-supply. The father is ultimately responsible
for the order of the family, and his discipline is stronger than the mother's as
the children grow older. There is a relation of friendly intimacy between alternate 603
generations. Children are on easy terms with their grandparents and will certainly
use the latters' households as an escape from home discipline or as a more generous
source of food if need or opportunity arises. Children are at no period encouraged
to live away from home with other relatives, but parents allow them to circulate 574
freely among a number of homesteads wherever they find the best welcome and the 858
most plentiful food, among families which are usually both neighbourly and close
agnatic relatives. Brother and sister have no material reasons for conflict and there 513
is a strong and lasting bond of affection and reliance between them, institutionalized
in the symbolism of a number of ritual occasions, and linked to their important [603]
relation to one another's children as mother's brother (*mwa*) and father's sister (*nyar*).
Apart from parents, these are the only two consanguine relatives of the first ascend- 606
ing generation who are picked out by special kinship terms. The newly married
woman is under the authority of her mother-in-law, and a man's relation to his wife's
parents is marked by deep respect and avoidances. Ritual practices as well as personal 842
attitudes emphasize the importance of fertility and virility,[1] and the value attached
by a man to a numerous offspring and the ability of his wives to provide it. The
Luo are aware of the male and female parts in procreation, but say that 'the woman's
blood goes for nothing'. This seems a necessary inference from the nature of lineage
organization rather than vice versa, for they would not argue that there is any [582]
tendency for children to resemble the father rather than the mother, nor do they
permit marriage with close consanguine kin though of an unrelated lineage. It is

[1] e.g. the special rites which have to be carried out for a middle girl dying unmarried, a wife dying without children, a widow dying before remarriage, a man dying when one of his wives is still childless, or a man dying before he has experienced sexual intercourse, the latter being treated similarly to a barren woman.

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

village straight to the hut which houses the body and to fall prostrate on it, wailing and crying. However, on this occasion, the woman walked very slowly into the village as if in a daze and without crying and without wailing and without saying a word to anyone. She entered her house and locked the door. Those in the village immediately became suspicious and broke the door down but within those five minutes she was found dead from hanging. The villagers told me that she believed the curse of her father had killed the man she loved, so she went to join him.

Suicide Case No. 23.

An elderly woman, whose husband had died, depended on her children for sustenance. In her old age she contracted a disease similar to leprosy. Her son, as is customary on such occasions, destroyed her house in the compound and built one for her outside of the homestead. One morning they found that she had hanged herself because, they stated, of the pain and trouble she experienced through her illness and because she was so unhappy that she could not take her grandchildren to touch and love as was her role in life as a grandmother. Her illness barred her from all of the village activities, and she felt that she was no longer part of the family. Her ghost was not considered to be any more dangerous than that of a person who died a normal death because she was old and her suicide was from old age and weariness. She held no grudge against anyone.

[pp. 214-272 not processed]

20:Omiade I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

853 when a mother is eating she will hear her child cry out
[154] for some of her food.

From six to nine months, gruel continues to be the staple article of diet. In certain strict families adult food is not given until the child is over a year old. Babies fed on cow's milk begin using adult food during the first or second month.

[714] *Restrictions on the suckling of babies.* It is considered a
[961] breach of taboo for a nursing mother to suckle her neighbour's child. This restriction is based on the fear that some woman with poor milk may, in suckling a
[777] baby, kill it. One of my informants pointed out that in the early days of missionary work an attempt to break this taboo had failed. She said that many of the children thus suckled had died, and the attempt had been abandoned. One exception to the restriction, however, is
[609] that of a mother-in-law. In cases of necessity she is permitted to suckle her daughter-in-law's child because it is assumed that her milk has stood the test.

833 In rare instances there seems to be different treatment
595 of male and female children in a polygamous home with regard to suckling. Some of my informants stated that inter-suckling is permitted if all the nursing mothers have female babies.

[587] Nevertheless, the taboo against inter-suckling of male babies is reinforced by the fact that it is possible for a son to marry one of his father's younger wives. Hence a woman refuses to suckle a child who might become her husband on the death of the father.

853 The social restriction with regard to the suckling of
[177] infants is still observed with rigidity, and there are no evidences of a change even under the impact of modern ideas.

Methods of feeding. No force is used in feeding young babies. A little gruel in a small container is put to the

20:Omonde 1-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

FL2 child. Having in the beginning created the child's liking for her breasts she must resort to crude methods to shift the child's interest to other sources. Hence weaning is not only a break in the time-honoured connection between mother and child, but also a significant psychological factor in the child's development. A closer analytical study of children would help to show how far the fears established during infancy influence their later emotional life.

Parent-child Relationship

156 593 The relationship between parents and children from the age of two to six is principally determined by two factors: discipline and the provision of food. Parents feel that children of both sexes tend to prefer their mother partly because of her frequent contact with them, and even more because their food in its ready form is under her control.

In feeding children a mother's sympathies often prevent her from restricting their food, but the reverse situation may exist and sometimes we find a father who loves his child so much that he will give it all the food it desires. If the father is more severe than the mother in this respect the child naturally prefers the mother, and, similarly, a child will prefer a father who feeds it to a mother who restricts its food.

155 593 603 A further complication arises when the grandparents come into the matter. So delicately balanced is this relationship depending on food and discipline that the slightest difference is sufficient to draw the child towards those who favour it. This means that if the grandparents offer it better conditions, the child will stay with them most of the time. Hence, when I was once talking to a couple I know, I was informed that their daughter would not remain with them but preferred her grand-

20 Ominde 1-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

parents—a fact which had already struck me during my visits to the family. Although I have frequently visited them, I have seldom found the children there, and even more rarely at meal times. This situation would have become more pronounced when the children were weaned.

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20:Orninde 1-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

The strongest tie of relationship exists between the children of one mother. This close relationship extends to the maternal as well as the paternal grandparents. Children may be taken to the maternal relatives while they are still young, or they may sometimes go for visits when they are a little older. Although they share the same father, the relationship of the children with those of the other houses is much less close, because the mother in each house thinks first of the future of her own children. For this reason the undue wealth of any one particular house is viewed with alarm in the other houses and a mother will maintain a constant watch on the other sections of the family lest their successes should overshadow her own children.

When a child goes to stay with its maternal grandparents it is often spoilt by their too readily shown affection and their unwillingness to teach it discipline. Hence parents complain that children who spend most of their time with their maternal relatives are unruly and difficult to manage when they return to their homes.